

VZCZCXRO6838
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #2731/01 3261657
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 221657Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5341
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 002731

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG AND AF/SE
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE GAINS MOMENTUM

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Government has mobilized thousands of tribal and factional militia and authorized tactics that bring the scope of fighting almost full circle to that of late-2003 and early 2004. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are functioning in a supporting role, providing mobile infantry, Antonov bombers, and attack helicopter support as needed. Militia are attacking the civilian bases of support for both signatory and non-signatory rebel forces to weaken their capacity to sustain operations and stop both non-signatory and signatory movements from regaining strength. The government is also relying on mobile militia to interdict supply lines from Chad. End summary.

¶2. (C) Fighting will most likely increase over the next several weeks with four objectives: 1) prevent the non-signatory commanders from unifying, 2) prevent Minni Minawi from strengthening his position, 3) significantly weaken National Redemption Front (NRF) forces both logistically and operationally, and 4) set the conditions that will support negotiations favorably to the government with non-signatories in the near future. End Summary.

Militia Forces Destroying Bases of Operation

¶3. (C) Over the last six weeks, militia attacks have been widespread and building frequency. Attacks along the border with Chad have occurred in the vicinity of Jebel Moon, Kulbus, and Tine, which are likely designed to destroy Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)/NRF safe havens for supplies moved across the Chadian border. Significant additional militia have been reported moving further north from Tine, with the mission of disrupting NRF supplies moving from Chad to northern Darfur along the Wadi Hawa corridor. The government would need more SAF forces to block the northern logistic routes, but mobile militia will effectively interdict and disrupt NRF resupply efforts.

¶4. (C) From November 14-18, various militia attacked villages in central North Darfur that are used as bases of operation and support for NRF elements. Fighting ranged from Mellit to Kutum to Birmaza, the heart of G-19 and SLM-Unity civilian support. The timing of these attacks correlates with efforts to organize a non-signatory commanders, conference. The attacks also commenced within 48 hours of the conclusion of successful negotiations between SLM-Minawi commanders and SLM-G19/Unity factions (reported septel).

¶5. (C) In South and West Darfur, government-aligned militia from the SLM-Free Will continued attacks against SLM-Minawi forces in Muhajiriya until fighting broke out within the Free

Will forces. Reports indicate that these Free Will forces are supported by the Wali of South Darfur, Al Haj Attal Manany, who has provided extensive amounts of ammunition and new assault rifles to the Free Will. In Jebal Marra, militia associated with SLM-AK (Abu Kharim) attacked fellow Fur tribesmen in five villages in the vicinity of Rokoko on November 17 and 18. Abu Gassim Imam, Abu Basset, and Dr. Osmosis agreed to join the government two months ago and recently signed an agreement in Libya with Free Will leader Abdurrahman Muse and Maghzoub al-Khalifa.

16. (C) Reports indicate that the government is attempting to control the level of destruction and killing by these militias with varying success. Looting of World Food Program trucks northeast of Kutum was stopped by SAF personnel. However, militias appear to have free rein to harass, steal, and plunder villages, livestock, and individual provisions and food stocks and have even resorted to dismantling or destroying water points.

Reduced Reliance on Suspect SAF Elements

17. (C) SAF forces accompany militia raids, but are mainly used to counter rebel resistance and react to rebel responses. Antonovs are used to provide intelligence and to bomb rebel bases situated in local villages. Attack helicopters are mainly used to react to rebel counterattacks and ambushes. These tactics save SAF forces from heavy fighting and keep suspect units with morale problems from engaging in attacks that produce the most casualties.

18. (C) The heavy use of militia also reduces the logistics burden on the SAF since the militias are more self

KHARTOUM 00002731 002 OF 002

sufficient. Reduced SAF numbers also lighten the requirement for extensive logistic support and frequent returns to garrisons to resupply, refit, and repair equipment. Reliance on militias will most likely allow the SAF to sustain operations past the typical 3-7 day forays against rebels seen from late July through early October. Significant SAF and militia operations could last for several more weeks.

Comment

19. (C) The government offensive has most likely postponed the non-signatory commanders, conference for the short to mid-term. It has impacted on progress Minawi has made to unite disparate elements of the old SLM and temporarily delayed his efforts to strengthen his position vis-a-vis the government. However, attempting to control Darfur through conflict and confusion may backfire on the government. Unleashing the Janjaweed and other aligned militias against a wide segment of the population has the potential to drive rebel forces back together, particularly if rebel forces obtained renewed external support. Failure to position the government for successful negotiations with a weakened and splintered rebel force would be a setback for the hardline approach taken by President Bashir and his inner circle. End comment.
HUME